Contents

1. Introduction: Bits and pieces **9**

1.1 A true fact, alternative choices 9

1.2 Urnfields on the edge of the continent: The Lower-Rhine-Basin 10

1.3 A historiographical circle 12

1.4 From pots to people 2.0 14

1.5 Research questions 22

1.6 Dataset and methodology 23

1.7 Research outline 25

2. The whole is more than the sum of its parts **27**

2.1 Introduction 27

2.2 Practice in practice: more than a habit 27

2.3 The liminality of death 31

2.4 Death as a *Narrative* 36

2.5 Piecing together *personhood* in the Bronze- and Iron Age 37

2.6 Conclusion 39

3. Dissecting the urnfield funeral **41**

3.1 From practice theory to theory in practice 41

3.2 The urnfield mortuary process 41

3.3 Building the database: the urnfield mortuary process in cells 52

3.4 Selection of cemeteries 68

4. The body and the mortuary process **83**

4.1 Introduction 83

4.2 Between deathbed and pyre 83

4.3 The cremation process 88

4.4 Between cremation and interment 92

4.5 Conclusion 105

5. Objects and the urnfield mortuary process **107**

5.1 Introduction 107

5.2 Urns 107

5.3 Selection of objects 121

5.4 Objects in relation to sex and age 141
5.5 Treatment of objects 143
5.6 Animals and the mortuary process 148
5.7 "Admixtures" 150
5.8 Conclusion: So many people, so many ways? 153

6. Assembling the ancestors 155

6.1 Introduction 155
6.2 Everybody counts: The inclusivity of urnfields 156
6.3 Assembling the dead: Modes of interment 161
6.4 Interring bodies whole: The composition of inhumation graves 182
6.5 Locating the grave 187

7. The related dead 195

7.1 Meaning through practice 195
7.2 The origin of urnfield mortuary practices in view of a practice-based approach 201
7.3 Personhood and the social dead 208
7.4 Land, ancestors and the related dead 213

8. Ancestral landscapes 217

8.1 The first holistic approach to urnfields 217
8.2 On the longevity of late prehistoric farmsteads 218
8.3 The 'population increase thesis' revisited 220
8.4 The open structure of late prehistoric burial grounds 224
8.5 Urnfields as part of ancestral landscapes 231

9. Breaking and making the ancestors 233

9.1 A fragmented past 233
9.2 The composite dead 236
9.3 From land and ancestors to ancestral lands 237
9.4 The end of the urnfields as we know them 238
9.5 Epilogue: Why we do the things we do… 239

References 241

Appendix I Inventory of sites 271

Appendix II Radiocarbon dates 315

Dutch summary 345

Acknowledgements 351